VII. AN EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF COLOR ON THE PROTOCOL OF THE RORSCHACH TEST*

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In recent months there has been an increasing interest in efforts to verify and explore experimentally some of the clinical inferences drawn from work with the Rorschach Test One concept that has received attention concerns the influence of color on the Rorschach protocol Assertions by Rorschach workers concerning the importance of color are too numerous and well known to be mentioned here (1, 2, 5, 8) Experiments by Rabin and Sanderson (7) and Wallen (10) have raised some doubts about the validity of some of these concepts There has never been experimental verification of the assumption that the presence of color in the Rorschach cards influences the subject's pattern of responses with respect to any of the other determinants in the test It has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the reaction pattern called "color shock" is a function of the presence of color The belief that color played such a role has been based on the procedure of comparing the performance on the chromatic cards (Cards II, III, VIII, IX, X) with the performance on the achromatic cards (Cards I, IV, V, VI, VII) The present discussion is a preliminary report on an experiment which studied the contribution of color to the Rorschach protocol by comparing responses to the standard Rorschach Test with responses to the Rorschach from which the color had been photographically removed and which otherwise was identical to the standard test A more complete report, along with the data, will be published later (6)

PROCEDURE

The subjects in the experiment were 100 seniors from Westinghouse High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania They were divided into two groups and equated for age, sex, school grade, color, and Otis I Q One group was presented the standard Group Rorschach After a six-week delay, this group was tested again using the noncolor version The other group received the noncolor test first, followed six weeks later with the standard Group Rorschach The second testing was accomplished under conditions identical to the first with respect to all procedures of administration, including time of day, lighting, seating arrangement, size of the projection, instructions, and timing Control was exercised over such factors as color vision and the subjects' knowledge of the basis of the experiment The scoring and analyzing of the records were handled carefully using Beck (1) categories except in the case of FM and m, both Klopfer (5) determinants

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The analysis of the data involved comparisons of the frequency of each scoring category as it appeared when color was present and when color was not present The frequency of each of twelve of the Beck indices of "color shock" was also compared in the color and noncolor series Indices involving direct use of color, exclamations and comments, and response time could not be evaluated in the group technique of administration

RESULTS

The results of the present investigation indicate that few differences appeared between the frequencies of the scoring catgories when color was present and when no color was present in the slides When the color was deleted, the F per cent was found to increase very significantly The number of space answers also increased when color was not present In a separate analysis of the records of 30 subjects who showed signs of "color shock" as it is usually defined, it was found that the F per cent and the number of popular responses were significantly higher in the noncolor series This was not found to be so for the space response, which was found to have changed significantly in the analysis of the data from the total group of subjects

When the frequency of each of the indices of "color shock" was examined, it was found that for the entire group the index, Reduced Response Total, was more frequent when color was present in the series This occurred only in the achromatic slides In the case of the 30 subjects who showed signs of "color shock" this was also the case, and in addition, Form Quality Impairment was more frequent in the presence of color than when color was absent Further analysis indicated that this occurred in the chromatic slides, and was in reality a result of the dropping out in the noncolor series of a large quantity of FC and CF responses when there was no color available

Examination of the data also revealed not only that the slides varied greatly among themselves in the frequency of each index of "shock" irrespective of the presence of color, but that some of the chromatic slides tended to be much more difficult than the achromatic slides in terms of the various "shock" indices, whether color was present or not.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of these findings a number of conclusions appear warranted·

1. The assumption that color widely influences performance in determinants other than the direct use of color itself does not seem acceptable

2 The concept of "shock" as induced by the presence of color is not supported

3 There appears to be no valid basis for comparing performance on the chromatic slides with performance on the achromatic slides since these stimuli differ markedly in difficulty among themselves

A revision of thought concerning "shock" and the influence of color appears to be indicated.

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